

Blowin' in the Wind

Dozens of kites soared through the skies on March 25, engaging in aerial combat above the National Mall, an open area national park in Washington, D.C. that showcases the Washington Monument obelisk as well as other memorials and the Smithsonian museums. The Smithsonian Kite Festival, started by aviation pioneer Paul E. Garber 40 years ago, has become a traditional part of the festivities marking the arrival of spring when Washington's cherry trees blossom. Enthusiasts tested their kite-making skills, engaged in traditional rokkaku battles in which people try to cut or ground the other kites, and showed off kite-flying tricks. Awards were given in more than 30 categories, kite organizations set up stunning displays and kite-flying masters wowed the crowds.